

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An information input apparatus, comprising:
- an imaging device that forms digital images of a subject;
 - a sound recording device that records sounds in a state of recording mode;
 - a storage medium that stores at least one of the digital images formed by the imaging device and the sounds input by the sound recording device;
 - a release switch that initiates a process of forming the digital images by said imaging device;
 - a sound effect output device that outputs a preset non-mechanical sound effect when the release switch is operated; and
 - a control device that connects to the sound recording device, the storage medium and the sound effect output device;
- wherein while in the recording mode, the control device controls the sound effect output device to prevent outputting of the preset non-mechanical sound effect when the release switch initiates the process of forming the digital images.
2. (Previously Presented) The information input apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
- a view finder through which the subject can be observed; and
 - an information output device that outputs visual information within the viewfinder, wherein the process also stores the at least one image in the storage medium, wherein the control device further controls the information output device to output a visual release switch indication when the release switch is operated.

3. (Currently Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 1, wherein the preset non-mechanical sound effect is a shutter sound effect, wherein the storage medium stores a plurality of types of the shutter sound effect, and wherein the sound effect output device outputs one of the plurality of types of shutter sound effect when the release switch is operated.

4. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 1, wherein the storage medium stores the images and the sounds together.

5. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a setting device that sets a photographic environment, wherein when the release switch is operated the sound effect output device further outputs sound effects based on the photographic environment set by the setting device.

6. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 5, wherein the setting device is a compression device that compresses the images formed by the imaging device at a selected one of a plurality of compression rates.

7. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 6, wherein a frequency of the sound effects output by the sound effect output device is changed based on the selected compression rate.


8. (Previously Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 6, wherein the setting device further sets an information input apparatus operating mode, wherein the sound effect output device outputs the sound effects based on the operation mode set by the setting device.

9. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 8, further comprising a changing device that changes the sound effects corresponding to the operation mode.

10. (Previously Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 1, wherein the sound playback device silences all or part of the preset sound effect when the preset sound effect is included in the sound stored by the storage medium.

11. (Previously Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 10, further comprising a selection device that selects whether to remove the preset sound effect included in the sounds output by the sound playback device, wherein a sound removing device silences all or part of the preset sound effect when removing the sound effect is selected by the selection device.

12. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 10 further comprising a deleting device that deletes all or part of the preset sound effect from the sounds output by the sound playback device when the preset sound effect was included in the sounds that the sound recording device records.

 13. (Previously Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 1, wherein the information input apparatus includes the sound playback device that outputs the sounds stored in the storage medium, and wherein the sound effect output device is controlled by the control device to selectively output a preset sound effect having a frequency incapable of being recorded by the sound recording device, incapable of being stored by the storage medium, or incapable of being played back by the sound playback device.

14. (Previously Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a display that displays the images formed by the imaging device and the images stored by the storage medium.

15. (Original) The information input apparatus of claim 1, further comprising an illumination device that illuminates the subject with light.

16. (Currently Amended) An information input apparatus, comprising:
imaging means for forming digital images of a subject;

sound recording means for inputting sounds in a state of recording mode;

storage means for storing the digital images formed by the imaging means and the sounds input by the sound recording means;

indicating means for indicating start of a process of forming the digital images by said imaging means;

sound effect output means for outputting preset non-mechanical sound effects when the indicating means indicates the process of forming the digital images is started; and

control means connected to the sound recording means, the storage means, and the sound effect output means;

wherein while in the recording mode, the control means controls the sound effect output means to prevent outputting of the preset non-mechanical sound effects when the process of forming digital images is started.

17. (Previously Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 16, further comprising:

observation means for observing the subject; and

information output means for outputting visual information within the observation means, wherein the indicating means is a release button, wherein the process also is an image recording process that stores the images formed by the imaging means in the storage means, wherein the control means controls the information output means to output a visual release button indication when the process is started.

18. (Currently Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 16, further comprising setting means for setting one compression rate among a plurality of compression rates for the images formed by the imaging means, wherein a frequency of the preset non-mechanical sound effects corresponds to the compression rate set by the setting means.

19. (Currently Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 18, wherein the setting means further sets an information input apparatus operating mode, wherein the preset non-mechanical sound effects correspond to the operating mode set by the setting means.

20. (Currently Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 16, wherein the information input apparatus includes the sound playback means for playback of the sounds stored in the storage means; and further comprising:

sound silencing means for silencing all or part of the preset sound effects when the preset non-mechanical sound effects are included in the sounds stored by the storage means.

21. (Currently Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 20, further comprising selecting means for selecting whether the preset non-mechanical sound effects included in the sounds played back by the sound playback means are silenced, wherein the sound silencing means silences all or part of the preset non-mechanical sound effects when silencing the sound effects is selected by the selecting means.

22. (Currently Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 20, further comprising deleting means for deleting all or part of the preset non-mechanical sound effects from the sounds input by the sound recording means.

23. (Previously Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 16, wherein the sound effect output means selects and outputs a preset sound effect with a frequency incapable of being input by the sound recording means, incapable of being stored by the storage means, or incapable of being played back by the sound playback means.

24. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling an information input apparatus, comprising:

forming digital images of a subject using an imaging device;

performing sound recording of sounds occurring near the information input apparatus using a sound recording device in a state of recording mode;

storing the digital images formed by the imaging device and the sounds recorded by the sound recording device in a storage medium;


operating a release switch to initiate a process of forming the digital images by said imaging device;

outputting a non-mechanical sound effect when the image forming process is initiated; and

controlling recording, storing and outputting of the non-mechanical sound effect; wherein while in the recording mode, preventing outputting the non-mechanical sound effect when the process of forming the digital images initiates the sound effect.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, further comprising:

observing the subject through a viewfinder; and

 outputting visual information within the viewfinder, wherein the process also is an image recording process that stores the images formed by the imaging device in the storage medium, wherein the visual information is a release switch operation indication when the release switch is operated.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24, further comprising setting the photographic environment with a setting device, wherein the sound effect outputting step outputs the non-mechanical sound effect based on the photographic environment set by the setting device.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein the setting step sets an information input apparatus operating mode and the outputting step outputs the non-mechanical sound effect based on the operation mode set by the setting device.

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24, further comprising:
playing back the sounds stored in the storage medium with a speaker; and
silencing the non-mechanical sound effect when the sound effect is included in
the sounds recorded by the sound recording device.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 28, wherein the silencing step
comprises deleting the non-mechanical sound effect from the sounds when the
non-mechanical sound effect is included in the sounds recorded by the sound recording
device.

30. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 24, further comprising playing
back the sounds stored in the storage medium with a speaker, wherein the sound outputting
step with the sounds input by the sound recording means, includes selecting and outputting a
sound effect using a frequency outside a frequency range of the sound recording device, the
storage medium or the speaker.

31. (Previously Added) The information input apparatus of claim 1, where the
preset sound effect is customizable.

32.-35. (Canceled)

36. (Previously Added) The information input apparatus of claim 16, further
comprising a customizable means for customizing the preset non-mechanical sound effect.

37.-40. (Canceled)

41. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24, further comprising
customizing the preset non-mechanical sound effect.

42.-45. (Canceled)

46. (Previously Reinstated) The information input apparatus of claim 1, wherein
the control device includes a device that prevents the output of frequencies that are lower or
higher than the common voice frequency.

47. (Previously Reinstated) The information input apparatus of claim 46, where the device is a filter.

48. (Currently Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 1, wherein the control device includes a device that prevents recordation of the preset non-mechanical sound effect by use of a reverse phase of the preset non-mechanical sound effect phase.

49. (Previously Reinstated) The information input apparatus of claim 48, where the device is an inverter.

50. (Previously Reinstated) The information input apparatus of claim 16, wherein the control means includes prevention means for preventing the output of frequencies that are lower or higher than the common voice frequency.

51. (Previously Reinstated) The information input apparatus of claim 50, wherein the prevention means includes a filter.

52. (Currently Amended) The information input apparatus of claim 16, wherein the control means includes means for preventing the recordation of the preset non-mechanical sound effect by use of a reverse phase of the preset non-mechanical sound effect phase.

53. (Previously Reinstated) The information input apparatus of claim 52, where the prevention means includes an inverter.

54. (Previously Reinstated) The method of claim 24, wherein the controlling step includes preventing the output of frequencies that are lower or higher than the common voice frequency.

55. (Previously Reinstated) The method of claim 54, wherein the preventing the output of frequencies that are lower or higher than the common voice frequency comprises filtering out such frequencies.

56. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the controlling step includes using a reverse phase of a phase of the preset non-mechanical sound effect to prevent the recordation of the preset non-mechanical sound effect.

57. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 56 where the using a reverse phase of the phase of the preset non-mechanical sound effect comprises inverting the phase of the preset non-mechanical sound effect.